

# How'd they do that?

## *How South Carolina's Red Carpet Schools Are Implementing the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs + Other Good Ideas*

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### 1. Parenting

A full-time school nurse calls any parent whose child has three consecutive absences so that she can offer assistance as needed. (Lake Murray Elementary, Chapin, 803-732-8151)

The home-school worker provides transportation for the families' dental and medical appointments when needed. (Ebenezer Avenue Elementary, Rock Hill, 803-981-1435)

HEEP – Healthy Eating and Exercise Program – is held at the school at night for families. Healthy food made by the cafeteria staff is offered along with an exercise program. (Blaney Elementary, Elgin, 803-438-3241)

Three persons on staff serve as liaisons between home and school: one serves 3- and 4-year-olds, another works with the Hispanic students, and a third one serves the rest of the student population. (East Elementary, Dillon, 843-774-1222)

A parent library is included in the school media center to provide books, tapes and videos on a variety of parenting issues. (D.R. Hill Middle, Duncan, 864-949-2370)

### 2. Communicating

Communications that go home with parents are routinely provided in Spanish. (Berkeley Elementary, Moncks Corner, 843-899-8860)

Teachers may wear jeans to school whenever they wear the staff t-shirts that say:

*Ask Me:*

- *What am I learning to improve my students' learning?*
- *What's my goal for the year?*
- *How am I making my lessons more meaningful to students?*
- *How am I raising the academic challenge and performance for each child?*
- *How am I ensuring parent participation and community support for our students?*

(Fork Shoals, Pelzer, 864-243-5680)

School tours are scheduled every Friday at 1 p.m. with additional tours offered as needed. (Oakview Elementary, Simpsonville, 864-213-1100)

Principal's roundtable discussion for new parents is offered in September as a one-on-one meeting where the agenda includes only the concerns and issues brought by attendees. (Oakview Elementary, Simpsonville, 864-213-1100)

Students enjoy sending their parents e-mail from campus reporting on school events. (Finley Road Elementary, Rock Hill, 803-981-1280)

Good News phone call forms are provided for teachers to complete so that the guidance counselor can call or write parents to inform them of their children's accomplishments. Recipients of Good News phone calls are announced each Friday. (Royall Elementary, Florence, 843-664-8167)

Assignment books are given to students at the beginning of the school year and go home nightly with daily assignments and notes from teachers. The books also contain schedules, procedures and policies. (Taylors Elementary, Taylors, 864-292-7655)

New parents who have enrolled children for the following year in kindergarten or first grade are invited to the May PTA ice cream social. (Paris Elementary, Greenville, 864-292-7569)

The principal signs every report card and makes comments for every student. (Whitmire Elementary, Whitmire, 803-694-2320)

Each grade level has a get-together over the summer so students/parents can meet the teachers. Events have included cookouts, ice cream parties, Hawaiian luaus, western round-ups and school tours. (Hunt Meadows Elementary, Easley, 864-850-3987)

The school spends one day each summer in two different subsidized apartment complexes in its attendance zone. Every September, teachers hold a school night at both complexes so that parents can meet teachers, join the PTA and ask questions. The school maintains an informational bulletin board in both apartments' community rooms. (Nursery Road Elementary, Columbia, 803-732-8475)

A parent coordinator makes calls throughout the day to inform parents about forgotten homework, sick children, special events and great news. She also coordinates meetings with teachers and parents. (McDonald Green Elementary, Lancaster, 803-285-7416)

Students record a five-minute loop of information about school activities for a student radio station that can be accessed within a two-mile access of the school. (Chapin Elementary, Chapin, 803-345-2214)

A FISH (Fresh Ideas Start Here) box is displayed on the office counter so parents and visitors can offer ideas and suggestions. (Beech Springs Intermediate, Duncan, 864-949-7600)

The principal or assistant principal calls parents of students who receive positive office referrals. (Jackson Middle, Jackson, 803-471-2237)

### 3. Volunteering

A group of mothers watch each other's children during the day so they can volunteer in the school. (Fork Shoals, Pelzer, 864-243-5680)

A basket of books and toys is available in the parent room so parents can bring younger children along when they come to volunteer. (Finley Road Elementary, Rock Hill, 803-981-1280)

Early Bird Readers and Lamplighters offer parents and grandparents opportunities to serve as reading mentors. (Taylors Elementary, Taylors, 864-292-7655)

### 4. Learning at Home

"How to Help with Homework" evening workshops held for parents. (Berkeley Elementary, Moncks Corner, 843-899-8860)

Children can write a letter to the principal (and have their parents sign it) to ask to take home a Wildcat, Catfish or Copycat for the weekend. Journals are provided for families to document the activities the Wildcat, Catfish, or Copycat has experienced. (Blaney Elementary, Elgin, 803-438-3241)

Family Reading Adventure Nights are offered four times a year. One night featured the superintendent reading *A Nice Walk in the Jungle* and wild animals from the Hollywild Zoo. (Brushy Creek Elementary, Taylors, 864-292-7705)

Once a quarter all parents receive a writing prompt to complete. A parent's writing from each homeroom is chosen and posted on the bulletin board in the hall. (Whitmire Elementary, Whitmire, 803-694-2320)

The Families and Schools Together program encourages parents to come once a week from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. to learn to work with their children for school success. (McDonald Green Elementary, Lancaster, 803-285-7416)

Parent University – offered through The Boys and Girls Club – meets twice weekly at the school and strives to make parents feel welcome and an integral part of their children's education. (Park Hills Elementary, Spartanburg, 864-594-4465)

When a future student is born, a card is sent to the family with an invitation to have lunch in the school cafeteria along with a canvas tote bag containing a school bib, video, *Goodnight Moon* book, safety electrical plugs, frame, bookmark and parenting literature. (Sylvia Circle Elementary, Rock Hill, 803-981-1380)

Parents of pre-schoolers with special needs are invited to monthly "Patterns" meetings hosted by one of the teachers. Bi-weekly "Helping Hands" sessions are offered at two different times during the day for all parents. (Duncan Elementary, Duncan, 864-949-2373)

## 5. Decision Making

All parents are automatically members of the Parent Teacher Organization. (Rice Creek Elementary, Columbia, 803-699-2900)

A “What’s on Your Mind?” workshop is held to solicit questions and opinions from parents. (Lake Murray Elementary, Lexington, 803-808-1545)

Two parents were the primary authors of a \$2.06 million Duke Endowment grant that provides an array of health services including a full-time nurse and a van to provide transportation to medical appointments. (Satchel Ford Elementary, Columbia, 803-738-7209)

Parents are invited to participate in monthly MUD PIE (Meeting, Understanding, Discussing, Parents in Education) meetings with the principal. (Crestview Elementary, Greer, 864-848-2400)

At the request of parents, before-school academic programs for second graders and extra computer time for intermediate students are offered. The building is now open earlier to accommodate parents who need to be at work early. (Jesse Boyd Elementary, Spartanburg, 864-594-4430)

## 6. Collaborating with the Community

Project LOVE, an intergenerational service project, brings seniors into the school to share skills and talents. (Irmo Elementary, Irmo, 803-732-8275)

Monthly meetings at the school with Cooperative Ministries, the United Way of the Midlands, Midlands Technical College and the Shandon Cluster of Churches evolved into the Helping Hand program, which provides books, school supplies and clothing to students and their families. (Hand Middle, Columbia, 803-343-2947)

In regularly scheduled sessions of “Principal Listens,” the community can address the school’s role in the neighborhood, changes under consideration and student interaction. (E.L. Wright Middle, Columbia, 803-736-8740)

The school provides a public school nursery for children from birth to 3 years old. After regular school hours and on weekends, the school serves as a branch of the county library and as a county recreation facility. In addition, the facility is used to conduct screenings by the local hospital, and the campus includes the building for the Head Start program. (St. Helena Elementary, St. Helena Island, 843-838-0300)

The school sets up displays showcasing students and their work as well as the school’s instructional opportunities at shopping malls and athletic events. (League Academy of Communication Arts, Greenville, 864-292-7688)

By participating in the Lunch Buddies program every Tuesday, employees from the Lower Savannah Works serve as positive role models and mentors for the school’s third graders. (North Aiken Elementary, Aiken, 803-641-2690)

## Other Good Ideas:

New students enrolling after the beginning of the school year receive baskets with necessary items to start a day at a new school and are assigned buddies in their new classes to introduce them to the class and school. (A.R. Lewis Elementary, Pickens, 864-868-9047)

“Sunshine Kids” serve as student greeters every morning at the school. (Olanta Elementary, Olanta, 843-396-4457)

Office staff receive a minimum of three hours of staff development relating to their specific areas of responsibility and an orientation on greeting and assisting visitors that come to the school. (Lakewood High, Sumter, 803-506-2700)

Parents and students are encouraged to come back to school if a jacket or book is left, or if they need to check the teacher’s blackboard for homework assignments. The school is staffed and open for parents from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. every weekday. (Nursery Road Elementary, Columbia, 803-732-8475)

The school improvement council selects a “Parent of the Quarter” and a “Parent of the Year.” (R. Earle Davis Elementary, Cayce, 803-739-4080)

Learn more from Red Carpet Schools:

Panel discussion/teleconference

Wednesday, October 2 afternoon